

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, undated, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. 1907? Dear Alec:

I think your Association idea is all right. You can't look at this thing in a small way. You want to inspire confidence by showing confidence, to gain generous cooperation and service by generous treatment and recognition. You want heirs to your ideas. The possible pecuniary rewards are little to you, the successful accomplishment during your lifetime of many inventions now under way means enormously much. Your daughters' husbands cannot carry them out, with the best will in the world they are neither of them fitted by bent of mind or education to do so. All they could do would be to put them in the hands of other young men like these to try and carry them out. They don't know of any others better fitted to do so, neither do you. These young fellows you know and like and they are devoted to you. They have youth, enthusiasm, the training you require as offset to the experience and knowledge you have. I don't believe they had the least idea of being unjust towards the men who have worked with you, but you could hardly think of Mr. McNeil or even Mr. Bedwin as heirs of your ideas, competent to carry them out independently. Training and standing do count in such things. You can easily provide that those who have helped you shall have a certain small interest in the profits and you can pay them good salaries, if necessary larger than those you pay the Associates. You admit the distinction already when you have these young fellows here as your friends and disciples.

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Then while the Association might be held in abeyance as far as the boys are concerned I don't see how it can with Mr. Curtis proposing to enter. He is already independent at the head of a well known and fast growing business firm which he has made himself. You cannot expect him voluntarily to come from such headship to be simply an assistant

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receiving a smaller salary than he can easily make as head of a firm which may be the Westinghouse Co. of another generation. It seems to me it has to be in some sort a partnership affair. You bring 15 years study of the machine in all parts except one. He brings several years study of and manufacture of this one part. While you might do without the expert knowledge he has it would take you some time to do it and meantime others are working on it, and anyway why spend any more time on it than necessary.

As for tying your hands etc, in the first place I say inspire confidence y giving it and secondly you have the power by retaining 51% and Bdg. the agreement is only for one year.